

**Department of Health and Human Services
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
National Cancer Institute**

**Minutes of the Research Process Subcommittee of the Interagency Breast Cancer and
Environmental Research Coordinating Committee**

April 21, 2011

The Research Process Subcommittee of the Interagency Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Coordinating Committee was convened for a meeting on April 21, 2011 at 1:00 p.m. via conference call. The Chair of the subcommittee is Michael Gould, PhD of the University of Wisconsin.

Subcommittee Members Present

Sally Darney, PhD
Michael Gould, PhD
Laura Nikolaides, MS
Kenneth Portier, PhD
Gayle Vaday, PhD

NIH Staff Present

Jennifer Collins, MR
Heather Shaw, MD

I. BACKGROUND

The Interagency Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Coordinating Committee (IBCERCC) is a congressionally mandated body established by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), in collaboration with the National Cancer Institute (NCI). This Committee is comprised of 19 voting members, including representatives of Federal agencies; non-federal scientists, physicians, and other health professionals from clinical, basic, and public health sciences; and advocates for individuals with breast cancer.

The Committee's primary mission is to facilitate the efficient and effective exchange of information on breast cancer research activities among the member agencies, and to advise the NIH and other Federal agencies in the solicitation of proposals for collaborative, multidisciplinary research, including proposals to further evaluate environmental and genomic factors that may be related to the etiology of breast cancer. The Committee serves as a forum and assists in increasing public understanding of the member agencies' activities, programs, policies, and research, and in bringing important matters of interest forward for discussion.

The objectives of the Research Process (RP) Subcommittee of the IBCERCC are integrated and dependent on the objectives and activities of the other Subcommittees¹ of the IBCERCC and include the following: to set research priorities (based on work of the State-of-the-Science Subcommittee), to decrease redundancies across federal and non-governmental organizations, to develop a process for soliciting research, to foster collaborations (based on the work of the Research Translation, Dissemination, and Policy Implications Subcommittee), to highlight peer review issues, and to identify most appropriate models for agencies to work together.

The IBCERCC RP Subcommittee held its fourth meeting, hosted by NIEHS and the NCI, via webinar on April 21, 2011 beginning at 1PM EST. Attendees of the meeting included Subcommittee members and NIH staff. The meeting agenda included progress updates on portfolio analyses and funding models, a review of action items from previous meetings, and discussion on additional chapters needed from this subcommittee.

II. Discussion

Michael welcomed everyone to the call and asked if there were any additions or edits to the minutes from the March 28, 2011 meeting.

Next, Ken presented the draft outline that has been developed by the group working on the portfolio analysis:

Chapter 1: Federal Research Programs on Breast Cancer and Environmental Factors (Portfolio Analysis)

1.1. Introduction

1.2. Agency Programs in Breast Cancer and Environmental Factors and their Stated Goals

1.2.1. *NIH*

1.2.2. *DOD*

1.2.3. *CDC*

1.2.4. *EPA*

1.2.5. *Others*

1.2.6. *Inter Agencies Programs*

¹ The other Subcommittees of the IBCERCC are the State-of-the-Science Subcommittee (Chair, Michele Forman) and the Research Translation, Dissemination, and Policy Implications Subcommittee (Chair, Jeanne Rizzo).

1.3. Coding of Federal Research Funding

1.3.1. *RePorter and Electronic Scientific Portfolio Assistant*

1.3.2. *Common Scientific Outline*

1.3.3. *Relevance to Breast Cancer*

1.3.4. *Research Topic*

1.3.5. *Other Agency-Specific Coding*

1.4. Methods for identifying relevant funded research - In this section, we will describe how the above coding discussed in 1.3 is used to identify the subset of federally-funded research of which we are interested.

1.4.1. *Identifying Breast Cancer Research* – In this section, we will examine federal funding for research projects, research centers, R&D contracts, intramural research, SBIR, STTR, and training that have some level of relevance to breast cancer. In this section we define how relevance is operationalized.

1.4.2. *Identifying Environmental Factors Research* - In this section we will define how environmental factors research were identified in the analysis. In particular, we will be searching abstracts for key words related to environmental factors: AhR Agonists, PCBs and PCB mixtures, clinical exposures, EMF, diet and dietary exposures, EDCs, organochlorines, metals, radiation, gene pathways relevant to breast cancer and related gene-environment interactions, and mixtures of environmental exposures.

1.4.3. *Identifying Intra Agencies Research Programs*

1.5. Summary of Findings

Federal funding (#, \$, %) for research on breast cancer

Federal breast cancer funding (#, \$, %) that is focused on related environmental factors=Relevant Federally-Funded Research (RFFR).

RFFR by common scientific outline major categories (etiology, prevention, models, etc...).

RFFR by major environmental factor categories (AhR Agonists, PCBs, etc...)

RFFR by funding mechanism (research project, center, R&D, intramural, intra-agencies, etc...)

RFFR by gene pathways and/or on gene-environment interactions

1.6.1 Discussion – This section will provide an assessment by the committee of the extent of coverage, pointing out areas that may be receiving less funding than expected. It will include a

discussion of funding models that were used to support the existing projects found in the portfolio analysis and preliminary assessment of funding gaps.

The group discussed the outline presented. Time was spent discussing what constitutes good and bad overlaps in funding. Collaborations between agencies are perceived as good, as well as the amount need to validate findings; especially in cases where the project is dealing with very low levels of a known carcinogen or an animal model that is unique to a particular laboratory.

Ken suggested that a better chapter title is needed.

How should the group deal with projects that fit into more than one CSO heading? Should the funding be counted multiple times? Michael expressed concern that we do not want to over represent the amount of funding in breast cancer and environmental research. To be counted in this area – the project needs to have a clear focus on environmental factors and breast cancer.

With regard to the data that can be presented in the report, Michael suggested that there could be charts/graphs for the obvious exposures (carcinogens, etc.) and then another that covers lifestyle factors such as obesity.

Jenny explained that in some cases the CSO code applied by this group might not match what the International Cancer Research Portfolio (ICRP) might use for NCI. Should we use the pre-assigned code from the ICRP or the one this group feels is most appropriate?

Ken asked how we should handle genetics/genomics/GxE projects.

Jenny will begin generating a draft slide set representing the work done to date on this Chapter. In addition, the group will begin fleshing out the outline in preparation for the meeting.

Jenny provided a few draft graphics summarizing some of the findings from this portfolio analysis group.

Next, the focus shifted to the work completed on Chapter 2. Jenny presented a few examples of trans/interdisciplinary funding models that she was aware of from NIEHS including the model for the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Centers (BCERC) and the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Program (BCERP), the Virtual Consortium for Translational/Transdisciplinary Environmental Research (ViCTER), the Disease Investigation through Specialized Clinically-Oriented Ventures in Environmental Research (DISCOVER), and an example from the intramural program at NIEHS (Director's Challenge).

Sally mentioned that EPA has some similar models including the some Center Projects. These include the Children's Center program (partnership between EPA and NIEHS), Air Centers, and Environment and Health Disparities Research Centers. Sally also briefly described the EPA Innovation Awards.

Gayle explained that DOD has something similar to the Innovation Awards that involves consumer advocates throughout the project.

Other models that can be included are the State Research Models. Sally and Cheryl are working on this part and Sally will send the current research completed for this to the group. The NSF (Ideas Lab) model should also be added. Michael asked if Laura could investigate this further.

Ken will ask the Health Research Alliance (HRA) for any additional models that should be investigated by the Committee.

The group spent the last portion of the meeting discussing the agenda for the subcommittee breakout sessions during the May meeting. Based on the discussion, Jenny will draft an agenda and send to the group for comments/edits.

III. Action Items due May 6

- Jenny will generate a draft agenda for the subcommittee breakout sessions at the May meeting
- Jenny will generate a draft slide set for Michael's presentation in May – including progress on the first two chapters
- Sally will send an update on progress made on state funding models
- Laura will research the NSF funding model
- Ken will ask the HRA for additional innovative models for consideration by this group
- Subcommittee members will flesh out both outlines and review/edit the slide set
- Subcommittee members will begin thinking about additional chapters needed from this group

IV. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m. on April 21, 2011.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes and attachments are accurate and complete.

/Michael Gould/

Michael Gould, PhD

Chairperson

Research Process Subcommittee

Interagency Breast Cancer & Environmental Research Coordinating Committee

/Gwen W. Collman/

Gwen W. Collman, PhD

Executive Secretary

Research Process Subcommittee

Interagency Breast Cancer & Environmental Research Coordinating Committee

Proper signatures

Treat as signed, § 1.4(d)(2)